The Problem
Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional household. We had come to feel isolated and uneasy with others, especially authority figures. To protect ourselves, we became people-pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. At the same time we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat.

We either became alcoholic (or prescribed another addictive behavior) ourselves, or married, or both. Failing that, we found other compulsive personalities, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our need for recognition and acceptance. We lived life from the standpoint of victors. Having an over-developed sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.

We became addicted to excitement. We confuse love and pity and tend to "love" people we can "pity" and "rescue".

We have "stuffed" our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts too much (Denial).

We judge ourselves harshly and have a low self-image and self-esteem.

We do not depend on others to tell us who we are.

Alcoholism is a family disease; we are brought up in alcoholic or dysfunctional families. These symptoms of the family disease are passed on to their children as they receive childhood education and training.

We again received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.

11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a low self-image and self-esteem.

12. We are dependent upon others to tell us who we are.

13. Alcoholism is a family disease; we are brought up in alcoholic or dysfunctional families. These symptoms of the family disease are passed on to their children as they receive childhood education and training and again receive from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.

14. Para-alcoholics (codependents) are reactors rather than actors.

The 12 Promises
1. We are admitted to God's program with realistic hope.

2. We do not depend on others to tell us who we are.

3. We are not frightened by angry people and no longer regard personal criticism as a threat.

4. We do not have a compulsive need to react to abandonment.

5. We do not feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves rather than giving in to others.

6. We will understand what will happen in this program.

7. We know that we have the power to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Flip Side of The Laundry List
We move out of isolation and no longer feel as unrealistically afraid of other people, even authority figures.

We no longer feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves rather than giving in to others.

We do not depend on others to tell us who we are.

We are not frightened by angry people and no longer regard personal criticism as a threat.

We do not have a compulsive need to react to abandonment.

We do not feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves rather than giving in to others.

We avoid emotional interjection and choose workable relationships instead of constant upset.

We are able to distinguish love from pity, and do not think we must "rescue" people we "pity" as an act of love.

We come out of denial about our traumatic childhoods and begin the ability to feel and express our emotions.

We stop judging and condemning ourselves and discover a sense of self-worth.

We grow in independence and are no longer scared of abandonment. We have independent relationships with healthy people, not dependent relationships with people who are very low in self-esteem.

We are not powerless any longer. We are in control of our own affairs and no longer feel as unrealistically afraid of other people, even authority figures.

We no longer feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves rather than giving in to others.

We do not depend on others to tell us who we are.

We are not frightened by angry people and no longer regard personal criticism as a threat.

We do not have a compulsive need to react to abandonment.

We do not feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves rather than giving in to others.

We avoid emotional interjection and choose workable relationships instead of constant upset.

We are able to distinguish love from pity, and do not think we must "rescue" people we "pity" as an act of love.

We come out of denial about our traumatic childhoods and begin the ability to feel and express our emotions.

We stop judging and condemning ourselves and discover a sense of self-worth.

We grow in independence and are no longer scared of abandonment. We have independent relationships with healthy people, not dependent relationships with people who are very low in self-esteem.

The characteristics of alcoholism and para-alcoholism have we grown in independence and are no longer scared of abandonment. We have independent relationships with healthy people, not dependent relationships with people who are very low in self-esteem.

We are actors, not reactors.
Thoughts On Inside Service (In-Reach)

Service in general is taking action to support and encourage adult children as they make the transition from fragmentation and regression to integrity and present-day thinking and doing. This means being ever-mindful of the requirement to 12th Step ourselves to wholeness and emotional sobriety. As more and more of the self wakes up we are increasingly able to go within and find, comfort and heal the hurt, vulnerable and frightened “inner” children, who have been lost, hidden or frozen in time and place, and bring them up and forward to the here and now. This completes the reunion of the divided self.

Cling to the thought that, in God’s hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have - the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them.

Pg. 124, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA Big Book)